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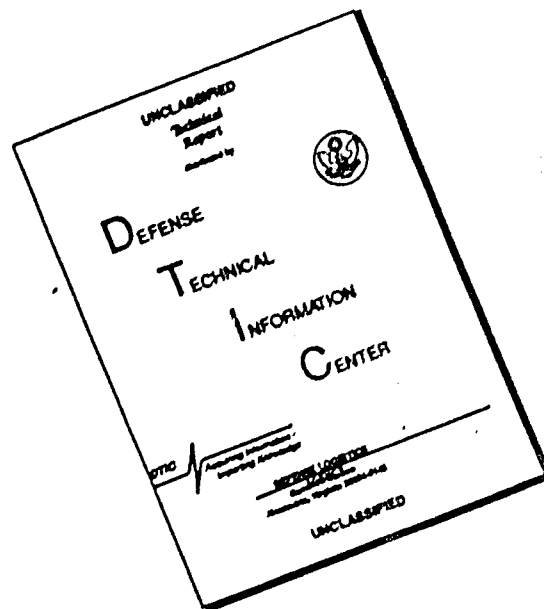
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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
HEADQUARTERS 31ST ENGINEER BATTALION (C)(A)
APO San Francisco 96491

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AVEGBA-CC

4 November 1971

SUBJECT: Operational Report -- Lessons Learned, 31st Engineer Battalion (C)(A)
Period Ending 31 Oct 71, RCS CSFOR -- 65 (R3)

TO: Commanding Officer, 159th Engineer Group, ATTN: AVEGB-OP, APO 96491
Commanding Officer, USAFENGRCOMDV, ATTN: AVCC-MO, APO 96491
Commanding Officer, USARV, ATTN: AVHDO-DO, APO 96375
Commander-in-Chief, USARPAC, ATTN: GPOP-DT, APO 96588

CC: Assistant Chief of Staff For Force Development
Department of the Army
Washington D.C. 20310

Distribution

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for information

for military operations

att: DAIMO-PCU

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Inclosure 3
712063

4 November 1971

Operations: Lessons Learned, 31st Engineer Battalion (C)(A)
Period Ending 31 Oct 71, 153 CSFOR -- 65 (A3)

1. Lessons Learned: Observations, Evaluations, And Recommendations

a. Personnel: None

b. Intelligence:

(1) Security of Plans

(a) OBSERVATION: During the 60th Land Clearing operation in Hau Nghia, security forces consisted of RF/PF forces. The following days cut plans would be discussed with the security commanders at an operations meeting the evening before the next days operations. The unit came under small arms fire and RPG fire as they entered the cut area, on several occasions.

(b) EVALUATION: The enemy appeared to know when and where to make contact with the land clearing companies, indicating a security leak.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: Coordination for the next days cut operation should be discussed and finalized in the morning of the cut when RF/PF forces are utilized.

(d) COMMAND ACTION: Requested RF/PF units be replaced with American mechanized units for security.

c. Operations:

(1) Security Forces for Land Clearing

(a) OBSERVATION: The RF/PF Infantry forces which secured the 60th LC Company during the Trang Bang, Ha Nghia province cut, proved to be undesirable. The foot security could not move as fast as the plows or react quickly enough to turn the enemy under immediate fire, thus leaving the plows unsecured.

(b) EVALUATION: The Infantry security could not protect the plows. The plows proceeded at a rate faster than the security. In addition they were constantly exposed to falling trees, booby traps and mines.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: Forces used to secure Land Clearing operations should be mechanized.

(d) COMMAND ACTION: Placed organic APC's and gun bearing M548 in cut to pull security. Requested that infantry be replaced by armored cav unit.

(2) Heavy Equipment Towing:

(a) OBSERVATION: There is often a requirement for recovering either an 830 wheeled tractor or a 10 Ton tractor truck and there is seldom an M8C or 10 ton wrecker available. To compensate for this units often use another 10 ton or an 830 bolt it and tow the inoperable vehicle using chains.

(b) EVALUATION: Often when the prime-mover is connected in a rear to front combination with a disabled 830 or 10 Ton, there is lack of lateral stability causing the towed vehicle to enter the lane used by opposing traffic. This was found to be true even at speeds of 7 to 10.

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November 1 71

Subject: Operational -- as learned, 31st Engineer Battalion (C)(A)
Reference: 100-100, 100-100 -- (2)

(c) OBSERVATION: Recommend that a Bobtail 330 be used for
moving the disabled 330 to the blade of the disabled 330 or to
the bumper of the disabled 330. The towing 330's blade can be raised if the
disabled 330's blade is lifted off the ground. Lifting shackles
are used to lift the disabled 330 in the operation. The 330 can then easily tow at
least one disabled 330.

(d) COMMAND ACTION: All DDC's and officers were made aware of this
operational procedure.

(e) OBSERVATION: The 31st Engineer Battalion

(f) OBSERVATION: The Land Clearing Companies uncover many dud
mines and explosives in their operations.

(g) OBSERVATION: These explosives must be destroyed where they are
found. An AT-4 or two is used in constant use.

(h) COMMAND ACTION: That 2 trained demo-specialist be made organic
to the Land Clearing Company.

(i) OBSERVATION: Two demo-specialists have been placed with each
Land Clearing Company in the area. These demolition specialists were taken from
the 31st Engineer Battalion.

(j) OBSERVATION: Control in Land Clearing Operations

(k) OBSERVATION: A command and control helicopter (cut LOH) for
the 31st Engineer Battalion is absolutely essential to the clearing operation.

(l) OBSERVATION: The cut LOH needs a cut LOH to guide the
plows through the initial phase, to control the operation throughout the day,
particularly in the initial phase, to reconnoiter the future cut areas,
and to estimate the progress made in the cut.

(m) OBSERVATION: That a cut LOH be provided on a daily basis,
with a minimum of 4 hours blade time, to the Land Clearing Company Commander.

(n) COMMAND ACTION: All possible emphasis is placed on obtaining
a daily cut in the initial stages of planning in any cut operation.

d. Graduation: None

e. Training: None

f. Logistics: None

(1) Equipment

(a) OBSERVATION: The 3/4 ton dump truck, M708, can be used
effectively on low class roads, where 5 tons are too heavy to be utilized.

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31st Engineer Battalion (C)(A)
RCS CSFOR -- 65 (R3)

(b) OBSERVATION: There are certain characteristics of the 3/4 ton dump truck that must be noted. The axles will snap consistently if 4 wheel drive is engaged and the driver tries to try and retract the vehicle from a stuck position, the driver is careless and releases the clutch too quickly. Also the bolts connecting the leaves of the springs under the rear axle are underdesigned bolt.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That modifications be made on the 3/4 ton dump truck to the axle.

(d) COMMAND ACTION: Drivers were schooled not to attempt to drive the vehicle out of a stuck position on a low ratio and 4 wheel drive, but to be pulled out by a tow vehicle.

1. Summary of Findings:

2. Recommendations:

(1) Report of the 31st Engineer for perimeter bunkers

(a) OBSERVATION: That by discontinuing requirements for heavy overhead protection for perimeter bunkers (Protection it rarely affords) and relying on the use of overhead protection from elements only, the need for heavy overhead protection is eliminated.

(b) OBSERVATION: Adequate protection for other than direct hits would be provided. Direct hits from present weapons would result in destruction of the structure with or without overhead protection, in this type of bunker.

(c) RECOMMENDATION: That the perimeter bunkers be constructed without heavy overhead protection.

(d) COMMAND ACTION: This unit issued prefab perimeter bunkers of such design by directive of USARV when 2 x materials were not available to allow for heavy construction.


JAMES J. ANDERSON
LTC, CE
COMMANDING

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1. (C) (S) 71) 1st Ind

2. (C) (S) Operational Report, Lessons Learned, 31st Engineer Battalion

(C) (A) Period ending 31 Oct 71, CS CSFOR-65 (R3)

27 NOV 1971

3. 150th Engineer Group, APO #6491

4. Commanding General, USA NCMC OMDV, ATTN: AVCC-40, APO 96491

Commanding General, USAFV, ATTN: AVH O-DO, APO #6375

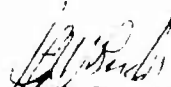
Commander-In-Chief, USAFAC, ATTN: GPOP-DT, APO #6588

5. Assistant Chief of Staff for Force Development, Department of the
Army, Washington, D.C. 20310

1. The significant activities and lessons learned have been reviewed and
an adequate description of the unit's operations during the period.

2. Reference Lesson Learned, "Security Forces for Land Clearing", Section
2, para C(1). Concur. Following the Trang Bang, Hau Nghia Province cut,
where the ARVN infantry security was replaced by a troop from the 2/11 ACR,
this policy has been implemented in MR III, and the land clearing companies
have been secured by US or ARVN armored cavalry units. This has proven to
be the most effective method for securing land clearing units. No action
by the MACV or A is recommended.

3. (C) (S) 71) 1st Ind


JOHN F. McBRIDE
1ST, CE
ASST Adjutant

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IN (4 NOV 71) Ind
Operational Report-Lessons Learned, HQ 31st Engineer
Battalion (C)(A), Period Ending 31 October 1971,
RCS CSFOR-65 (R3)

HQ, US Army, Pacific, APO San Francisco 96558

TO: HQDA (DAFD-74) WASH DC 20310

This Headquarters concurs in subject report as indorsed.

FOR THE COMMANDER IN CHIEF:

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